4. State Level Inter Institutional Committees exist under the Chairmanship of Secretary (Industries) of the State Govts, for revival of sick units.

5. RBI has advised its regional offices (Convenor of SLIICs) regarding setting up of the Sub-Committees of the Forum wherein the individual cases can be discussed.

Industrial Growth

42. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the projected industrial growth for the current fiscal year;

(b) the actual industrial growth during the first six months of the year; and

(c) the reasons for decline in the industrial growth?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) and (b) The overall industrial growth in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (Base 1993-94=100) was 3.6% during April-Sept., 1998 as compared to 6% during the comparable period of the previous year. No projection of industrial growth for the current fiscal year has been carried out. However, it is expected that the growth in industrial production would pick up during the second half of the financial year as a result of various measures taken by the Government to boost production.

(c) The slow down in industrial growth can be attributed to both the domestic and external factors. Domestic factors include weak demand on account of inadequate investment in infrastructure sectors, like power, ports and transport, and slow down in general investment mainly due to capital market conditions and partly due to corporate restructuring in some industries in order to become internationally competitive. On the external side, the export growth has been negative which has been aggravated by fall in world exports.

The demand has been slackening for basic goods like steel, cement, commercial vehicles, capital goods as well as consumer durables. This has resulted in cut back of production by the industries and build-up of inventories.

Export growth declined to (-) 3.28% during April-September, 1998 following significant declaration from 21.4% in 1995-96 to 4% in 1996-97 and 2.6% in 1997-98. As exports constitute 39.7% of total manufacturing output in the country, the decline in exports has adversely impacted industrial production.

Amendment of the Patent Act, 1970

43. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the observation of the Finance Minister made abroad that Government are committed to the obligations under World Trade Organisation (WTO) regarding Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights;

(b) if so, whether it is proposed to amend the Patent Act, 1970 shortly;

(c) whether a legislation for the purpose would be brought in the winter session of Parliament;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) whether adequate safeguards would be provided for protecting India's bio-diversity?

THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI SIKANDER BAKHT): (a) to (e) In order to implement the obligations contained in TRIPs Agreement of WTO Agreement, India has time till January 01, 2000 and a further time till January 01, 2005 to introduce product patent protection to areas of technologies not protected so far.

However, in order to comply with the obligations which came into force from January 01,1995 and also to comply with WTO rulings in the Indo-US Dispute on Patent Protection for Pharmaceutical and Agro-Chemical Products, Government is exploring different options and strategies for protection of public interest.

Rate of industrial growth

44. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the rate of Industrial production in the country during April-September, 1998, as compared to the growth rate in the corresponding period of the last year;